

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5595

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Early Learning & K-12 Education, January 17, 2022

Title: An act relating to prototypical school formulas for physical, social, and emotional support in schools.

Brief Description: Concerning prototypical school formulas for physical, social, and emotional support in schools.

Sponsors: Senators Wellman, Wilson, C., Billig, Das, Frockt, Pedersen, Randall, Saldaña and Wilson, J.; by request of Office of Financial Management.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/12/22, 1/17/22 [DPS-WM, w/oRec].

Brief Summary of First Substitute Bill

- Increases minimum allocations for school nurses, social workers, psychologists, and guidance counselors within the prototypical school model.
- Provides that allocations for physical, social, and emotional support staff may only be used for salaries and benefits of physical, social, and emotional support staff.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5595 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Wellman, Chair; Nobles, Vice Chair, K-12; Wilson, C., Vice Chair, Early Learning; Hunt, Mullet and Pedersen.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Hawkins, Ranking Member; Dozier and McCune.

Staff: Alexandra Fairfortune (786-7416)

Background: Prototypical School Model. The state's public school funding model allocates funding to school districts based on assumed levels of staff and other resources necessary to support a prototypical school serving an assumed number of students at defined elementary, middle, and high schools levels. The use of prototypical schools is intended to illustrate the level of resources needed to operate a school of a particular size using commonly understood terms such as class size, hours of instruction, and specified staff positions.

The structure of the formula, which appears in statute, provides allocations for classroom teachers at an assumed class size, plus other building-level staff such as principals, teacher-librarians, counselors, and office support. Based on these staffing ratios, the state uses salary assumptions for each of the different staff types to generate state funding allocations. The funding provided to school districts through the prototypical school formulas is for allocation purposes only, and districts have discretion over how the money is spent, subject to some limits.

The prototypical school model currently provides allocations for school nurses, social workers, psychologists, and guidance counselors using the following staff unit amounts:

	Elementary	Middle	High
School Nurses	0.076	0.060	0.096
Social Workers	0.042	0.006	0.015
Psychologists	0.017	0.002	0.007
Guidance Counselors	0.493	1.216	2.539

Summary of Bill (First Substitute): Staff Allocations. A new staff group called "physical, social, and emotional support staff" is created in the prototypical school model, to include the following staff types: school nurses, social workers, psychologists, school counselors, classified staff providing student and staff safety, and parent involvement coordinators. School districts may use allocations provided for physical, social, and emotional support staff only for salaries and benefits for staff employed or contracted to serve as physical, social, and emotional support staff.

Beginning September 1, 2022, the minimum allocations for school nurses, social workers, psychologists, and school counselors are increased to the following amounts:

	Elementary	Middle	High
School Nurses	0.246	0.336	0.339
Social Workers	0.311	0.088	0.127
Psychologists	0.104	0.024	0.049
School Counselors	0.993	1.716	3.039

In addition to the minimum allocations specified above, the following additional staffing units are provided for school nurses in the 2023-24 school year:

	Elementary	Middle	High
School Nurses	0.170	0.276	0.243

Beginning September 1, 2024, the minimum allocations for school nurses are increased again to the following amounts:

	Elementary	Middle	High
School Nurses	0.585	0.888	0.824

School Counselors. References to counselors in the prototypical school model are changed from "Guidance counselors, a function that includes parent outreach and graduation advising" to the new title of "School counselors addressing academic, career development, and social and emotional needs."

Skill Center Class Size. The average skill center class size within the prototypical school model is reduced from 20 students per teacher to 19 students per teacher to align with base allocations currently provided in the operating budget.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION COMMITTEE (First Substitute):

- Changes references to counselors in the prototypical school model from "Guidance counselors, a function that includes parent outreach and graduation advising" to the new title of "School counselors addressing academic, career development, and social and emotional needs."
- Allows school districts to use allocations provided for physical, social, and emotional support staff for salaries and benefits of those contracted to serve as physical, social, and emotional support staff.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: The bill contains several effective dates. Please refer to the bill.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on First Substitute: *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: This bill aligns with voter initiative 1351 and the staffing enrichment workgroup findings of 2019. The bill provides a carve out in funding to better meet student needs while providing a perfect amount of flexibility for staffing these roles. When conducting listening sessions with parents and students, school districts have heard again and again about a need for mental health support. It is the number one challenge facing high school students. Many students have reported planning or attempting suicide. This investment in school nurses and counselors will help promote student social and emotional well-being.

OTHER: School counselors are concerned about being categorized under a bigger umbrella, and are concerned that the legislation as drafted conveys a limited title and job description that doesn't reflect actual responsibilities. Right now schools with different poverty levels would be funded similarly, which is equal but not equitable. The allocation mechanism needs to be equitable based on student needs. While funds should not be diverted to other uses, the language should be broadened slightly to include staff training and related programs and services.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Lisa Wellman, Prime Sponsor; Bob Cooper, National Association of Social Workers WA Chapter; Chris Reykdal, Superintendent of Public Instruction; Virginia Barry, Stand for Children; Manuela Slye, Seattle Council PTSA; Lynette Brower, WA State Skills Center Association/NCTA; Paul Randall, Tri Tech Skills Center; Michael Uehara-Bingen, Washington State PTA; Dr. Carole Meyer, Moses Lake School District; Elizabeth Bonbright, President, Tacoma Public School Board of Directors; Dan Steele, School Funding Coalition; Roz Thompson, School Funding Coalition; Erica Hallock, Washington State Nurses Association; Liz Pray; Maddy Thompson, Office of the Governor; Samantha Fogg, Seattle Council PTSA; Julie Salvi, Washington Education Association; Glenn Jenkins, Washington Education Association; Carrie Suchy, Washington Education Association; Christine Nutters, Washington Education Association; Samantha Pacampara, Washington Education Association; Janice Nordland, Washington Education Association; Rick Chisa, Public School Employees of WA (PSE); Sean Dotson, Superintendent, Tumwater School District; Leslie VanLeishout, North Thurston Public Schools; Krestin Bahr, Peninsula School District - Gig Harbor, WA.

OTHER: Amy Brackenbury, Washington School Counselors Association; Dave Larson, Tukwila School Board; Melanie Smith, Committee for Children.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.